JESUS IS RESURRECTED
Sin and death were defeated in Jesus' resurrection.

JESUS CONNECTION
God raised Jesus from the dead to show that He accepted Jesus' perfect sacrifice for sins and to demonstrate the new life He offers to us in Jesus. Through faith, we are united to Christ in His death and His resurrection. Because He has risen, sin's curse has been removed, death has been defeated and we are promised everlasting life with God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY
CONFIDENCE – Full trust or assurance in the reliability of a person or thing.

HEAD
What specific details did the women and the disciples see at the tomb?

At first, what did the disciples think happened to Jesus when they saw the empty tomb?

HEART

Confidence is trusting fully in someone or something, but it's not believing blindly. Confidence must be based on evidence (past behavior or verifiable proof). How does the empty tomb give us confidence that Jesus can save us?

What are some reasons that someone might lose confidence in another person (a family member, coach/teacher or friend)? How can knowing who God is help us keep our confidence in Him?

To be someone others have confidence in, we must behave consistently and reliably, even when we don't feel like it. We do what we say we'll do. We tell the truth. We don't act one way with some friends and differently with others. Choose 1–2 options from the list below and commit to doing them consistently this week. Ask God to help you live reliably, just as He is.

- Finish and turn in every homework assignment this week. Focus on the class or classes where you often struggle to complete your homework.
- Complete all of your assigned chores thoroughly without being reminded.
- Treat your friends and classmates with the same respect, kindness and consideration, whether they are your best friend or not.
- Whenever you are asked a question, answer honestly and gently, even when the answer may not be received well or may get you into trouble.

LIFEWISE
Middle School

LESSON 75: DISCERNMENT
JESUS ENCOUNTERS TWO DISCIPLES

Luke 24:17:27, 30-35

JESUS ENCOUNTERS TWO DISCIPLES

Jesus is the central focus of Scripture and our worship.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus explained to His followers how the Old Testament pointed forward to His suffering and glory. Like the disciples, we must recognize that it is the gospel, the truth about Christ's death and resurrection, that helps us fully understand all of God's written Word.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

HEAD

What did Jesus explain to the disciples before He revealed Himself to them?

What did the disciples do after Jesus prayed and disappeared?

HEART

Jesus used the Old Testament to help the disciples understand the events they had just lived through. How can reading and understanding the Bible help us discern what is true and right in our world or in difficult circumstances?

Many people believe that hard situations and confusing problems prove God doesn't exist or doesn't love us. Do you agree or disagree? Why might God allow difficulties into our lives and how might He use them for our good (Romans 8:28)?

HANDS

Discernment helps us tell the truth from lies and right from wrong so that we can choose to live God's way. It always involves comparing what is said or done with what is true, rather than taking everything at face value. Complete one of the activities below to practice discernment this week:

- Read three articles or watch three videos about the same current event, new study or important person. How are they the same? How are they different? How could you fact check them? Share what you learn with a friend or mentor (parent, teacher, coach).

- Imagine that your friend shares something (online or in real life) that isn't true about someone you have a class with. Consider why you disagree with them. How can you respond wisely?

- Think of a situation or issue that causes you to worry or be anxious. Write down your thoughts without editing, and then read it again out loud. Use one color to mark what you wrote that is factually true and provable and a different color to mark what you don't know for sure or can't prove. What do you notice? Share what you discover with a friend or trusted adult.

JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES

John 20:19-29

JESS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES

Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world, Jesus also sends us to be on mission.

JESUS CONNECTION

In the same way that God the Father sent His Son, Jesus sent His disciples. As followers of Jesus, we are sent anchored in God's peace, empowered by the Holy Spirit and made bold by the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

BOLDNESS – Choosing to do the right thing, even if you are afraid.

HEAD

Where were the disciples when Jesus appeared to them? Why?

What did Jesus send His disciples out to do?

HEART

Jesus appeared to His disciples multiple times in the 40 days after His resurrection. How might actually seeing Jesus increase their boldness in sharing about Him?

Fear and doubt are the enemies of boldness. Knowing Jesus was alive helped the disciples stop being afraid and removed Thomas' doubts. How might knowing that God gives us the same power through the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead help us to live boldly for Jesus?

HANDS

The Bible promises that "nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). This doesn't mean that God will help us do whatever we want. Instead, it means that God enables us to live His way boldly, no matter what. Write Luke 1:37 in the center of a piece of construction paper or card stock. Then, cut out or draw pictures that show different ways we can help others, show compassion or live God's way. Pray and ask God to help you do those things boldly because with Him, nothing is impossible.

LESSON 77: SUBMISSION
JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-11

JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES

Jesus commands all of His followers to go and make disciples.

JESUS CONNECTION

Before Jesus ascended to the Father, He commissioned His disciples to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. Under the authority of Jesus, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, we make disciples of all peoples as we anticipate the return of Christ.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SUBMISSION – Choosing to be under the authority of others.

HEAD

What mission did Jesus give to the disciples?

Whom did Jesus promise to send to the disciples? Why?

HEART

What makes it most difficult to place yourself under Jesus' authority? What would it take for you to be willing to follow His commands in all areas of your life?

What makes it easier to submit to someone's authority? What makes it hard? Why would knowing who Jesus is and what He has promised help us submit to Him more willingly?

HANDS

Jesus told His disciples to "go and make disciples" but also to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came. They obeyed both commands, just not at the same time. When we choose to submit to God and live His way, we will need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us know whether "go" or "wait" is the best response in each situation. Consider the questions below or discuss them with a friend or small group (or in LifeWise).

- Do you tend to be a "Go" person or a "wait" person? Do you want to dive in and get started (take action) or prefer to plan and research first (wait and see)?

- Which option—Go or Wait—is described in the following examples? Was it a good choice? What could they have done better or differently?
  - Joey wanted to apply for a scholarship to a week-long STEM summer camp, but he worked on it so long that he missed the deadline. He asked for more time, but the committee said he would have to reapply for next year.

  - Rebecca's mom told her on Tuesday that a new family had moved to their street and encouraged her to go greet their daughter. On Thursday, Rebecca made cookies and took them to the new neighbors to welcome them.

  - Dante's teacher has a strict "no devices" policy in class. His practice schedule changed for the afternoon, and he decided it was too important to wait until lunch to text his mom. When the teacher caught him, though, he got a detention.

TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 2:1-4, 22-24, 36-47

TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit fills God's people to teach and empower us.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus had instructed His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit because He would empower them to be His witnesses on Earth. Just as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, filled them and empowered them at Pentecost, resulting in about 3,000 new believers. Still today, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, and the Spirit works in our lives to make us more like Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

RESPONSIBILITY – Taking ownership of my choices and behavior, including the consequences.

HEAD

What happened when the Holy Spirit came?

How did Peter advise the people to respond when they understood their sin?

HEART

When someone else points out our mistakes, it can be tempting to defend ourselves and reject their opinion or feel indifferent about the situation. What would it look like for you to own your mistakes and take responsibility for them?

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples to help them turn away from sin and become more like Him. When have you felt convicted or "pierced to the heart" about your own sin? Has this led to a change in your heart and way of living? Why or why not?

HANDS

Each of us behaves in ways that are not beneficial or are sinful. Things like not finishing our homework, treating another kid badly to impress a popular friend, or choosing not to tell the truth to avoid getting in trouble. Choose to do one or both of the following options this week:

1. Think about a way you acted wrongly in the recent past. Take the time to own your sin and confess it both to God and anyone you hurt and ask for their forgiveness.

2. Think of a specific way you are living that the Bible says is wrong. Ask God to give you a change of mind and heart and help you to live like Jesus in this way through the power of the Holy Spirit. (If you're not sure what Jesus would do, ask your LifeWise teacher, youth leader or pastor)

EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 3:1-7, 11-20

EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are called to meet people's earthly and spiritual needs.

JESUS CONNECTION

Once the Holy Spirit was given, the disciples began boldly proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit displayed God's power through the miracles the disciples performed in Jesus' name.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMPASSION – Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help.

HEAD

Describe how Peter and John showed compassion to the lame man.

How did Peter explain the healing of the lame man to the crowd? How did Peter urge the crowd to respond?

HEART

The stories in the Bible reveal a God who shows compassion on both His people and His enemies. How might knowing how God acts encourage us to act with compassion towards others as He does?

Jesus said the two greatest commandments are “love the Lord your God” and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–40). How would showing compassion fulfill these two commands?

HANDS

Pain and suffering exist in our world because sin has twisted God’s good creation, and God invites us to work with Him to help relieve that suffering right where we are. Brainstorm 3–5 practical ways you can demonstrate compassion to someone you know personally who is suffering or facing something hard right now. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you do them this week.

SHOWING CHRIST IN TIMES OF TRIAL

1 Peter 1:3-9, 2:11-17

SHOWING CHRIST IN TIMES OF TRIAL

When we honor God through trials, the difference Jesus makes in our lives is made clear.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus' followers are called to endure life's trials with hope, joy and honor so that even those who wrong us might see the goodness of Christ through us. When we live in this way, we follow the pattern of Jesus. Because of Jesus' obedience to the Father on the cross, we who wronged Him are able to be saved.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

PERSEVERANCE – Not giving up despite difficulties, failure or opposition.

HEAD

What inheritance is kept in Heaven for Jesus' followers? How is this inheritance described?

How are Jesus' followers instructed to live while going through trials?

HEART

Difficult experiences are not fun or easy, but they can have positive results. Think of something hard you went through and write down 1–2 ways that something good came from that hard time.

Why would knowing Jesus and the hope we have in Him help us persevere in hard times?

HANDS

When you are going through a trial, it is easier to persevere when you have a plan to work from. Use the acronym below to help you as you deal with difficult circumstances, now or in the future.

- P – Pray about what you're facing
- O – Open up to a trusted friend or advisor
- W – Write down something God is teaching you or you are learning during this hard time
- E – Encourage or do something nice for someone else
- R – Remind yourself of all God has provided and thank Him for being with you

PURSUING GODLY LIVING

God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus fully obeyed the Father and died the death we deserve because of our sin. When we trust in Jesus, He forgives our sin and grants us His own perfection, making us right with God. As a result, we are able to reflect Jesus in the way we live as we obey God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely, without wasting them.

HEAD

Fill in the blanks: God's divine power has given us everything required for _____ and

_____ through the _____ of Him.

What will we be guarded from if we increasingly grow in faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, gentleness, brotherly affection and love?

HEART

Since Jesus gave us His perfection in exchange for our sin, as well as gifts and talents to use for Him, how should we see and use those gifts?

Peter says to “make every effort” to live God’s way using God’s strength so we will not stumble and prove our faith is real. What would it look like not to make every effort? What would a good steward do instead?

HANDS

Write a list of specific gifts God has given you below. They could be natural talents (creative, artistic, musical, scientific, good with numbers, building, organizing, etc.) or qualities (friendly, positive, compassionate, peace-maker, giving, etc). Pick one of your gifts and write down two ways you could use it in a way that reflects God to others.

LIVING GENEROUSLY

Christians are to avoid living selfishly, instead giving generously and sacrificially.

JESUS CONNECTION

Ananias and Sapphira's lie was a sin against the Holy Spirit. The Spirit knows when giving comes from a generous heart and when it comes from a proud or deceitful heart. The Holy Spirit prompts us to share our resources and give generously to those in need, following the example of Jesus, who gave up heavenly riches to share His inheritance with all who trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

GENEROSITY – Sharing our best with others.

HEAD

How did Jesus' followers provide for each other's needs?

Describe how Ananias and Sapphira acted deceitfully toward the church and God Himself.

HEART

Ananias and Sapphira wanted to appear generous without making the necessary sacrifice. How can remembering that Jesus gave up all things to come to the earth and die for us on the cross change our motivation to give of ourselves generously?

Was God's concern that Ananias and Sapphira didn't give all of the money, or that they *said* they gave it all? How can pride and comparing ourselves with others prevent us from being generous?

HANDS

The Bible reveals clearly that God is a generous God. List 3–5 ways that God has been generous to us. Now brainstorm 3–5 ways that you can model the same kind of generosity in your family, school or community this week. Choose one and ask the Holy Spirit to help you do it with the right attitude.

TRUSTING CHRIST IN LIFE AND DEATH

Acts 6:8-10; 7:44-51, 54-60

TRUSTING CHRIST IN LIFE AND DEATH

The Spirit empowers God's people to boldly proclaim the gospel, even in the face of death.

JESUS CONNECTION

Both Jesus and Stephen were falsely accused and charged for blasphemy. Both Jesus and Stephen prayed for their executioners. Both Jesus and Stephen entrusted their spirits to God as they died. As a follower of Jesus Christ, Stephen reflected His Master, in life and in death.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others to protect myself.

HEAD

How did Stephen respond when members of the synagogue argued with him?

What was Stephen's response when the religious leaders began to stone him?

HEART

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would "guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). How did the Holy Spirit help Stephen to be truthful? How does He help us today?

When is telling the truth a loving thing to do? When is it not a loving thing to do?

HANDS

Being truthful is more than just sharing information or knowledge that is right. It also means that our lives match what we believe—that we do what we say we believe is right. For each statement and situation below, write out a specific action you'd need to take in order to live a fully truthful life God's way.

- Everyone should be treated with kindness. (A sibling ruins your science project.)
- God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). (Your teacher asks you to help her during study hall.)
- It's never okay to lie to get out of trouble. (If you get in trouble, you'll be benched for 2 games.)

TRUSTING IN THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:16-17, 3:23, 5:8-11, 6:23, 10:9-13

TRUSTING IN THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION

This is the gospel: because of sin, all deserve death and separation from God, but God provided Jesus as our substitute, to pay our sin penalty, to remove our sin and to provide His righteousness in its place. All who trust in Jesus will be saved and brought into a right relationship with God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Erasing a debt that another person owes me.

HEAD

What do we deserve as a punishment for our sin (Romans 6:23)? Why?

What does God promise to those who confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that He rose from the dead?

HEART

Can forgiveness ever be earned? Why or why not? If we cannot earn forgiveness, how does God offer it to us?

Why is it easier to forgive someone you like than someone you hate? Jesus loved us enough to die for us, His enemies, so that we can be forgiven. What does His sacrifice reveal about how God wants us to forgive?

HANDS

Consider this parable: *When someone hurts us, it's like being handed a large rock. We can carry the rock with us, bearing the heavy load. This is holding on to anger/resentment/bitterness. We can throw the rock back at them. This is revenge. Or we can set the rock down and leave it behind. This is forgiveness. We cannot choose whether someone hands us a rock. But we alone get to choose what we do with it.*

Think of someone you are struggling to forgive. Cut a large rock shape out of paper or construction paper and write on it what that person did to you. Consider your three choices: carry it, throw it, or set it down. Pray and ask God to help you set it down and forgive, in the same way that God has forgiven you because of Jesus. Rip the paper rock up and throw away the pieces to show that you have chosen to forgive.

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL

True faith is always demonstrated in the way we live.

JESUS CONNECTION

Salvation from sin comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and not from works (Eph. 2:8-9). However, true faith leads to good works in the life of the believer, verifying that faith to be real. True faith brings glory to God and draws others to faith in Christ.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

KINDNESS – Being considerate, generous and compassionate toward others.

HEAD

Why is it so important that a follower of Jesus has both faith and works?

How did Abraham's actions show his faith?

HEART

Why is the way we treat others an accurate way to tell whether our faith is alive or dead?

Titus 3:4–5 says, "When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us." How does faith in God prompt us to show kindness to others as He showed it to us?

HANDS

God has called us to be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32). Choose one of the people or groups below and brainstorm 2–3 ways you can show kindness to them this week, like a "random acts of kindness" challenge. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you actually put the ideas into practice this week.

- A parent or trusted adult
- A friend or teammate who is struggling
- A nonprofit group in your area
- The cafeteria workers in your school

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

The Holy Spirit leads us to proclaim the gospel so that others might be saved.

JESUS CONNECTION

The Ethiopian eunuch was familiar with the Old Testament prophets but didn't yet know that their message was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to help the eunuch understand how Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just as the prophets predicted.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

HEAD

What directions did the Holy Spirit give Philip?

How did the eunuch respond to Philip and the good news of Jesus?

HEART

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help remind us of Jesus' words, convict us of sin and prompt us to live God's way. How can we listen carefully to God's Spirit?

How does what we find most important (interests, people, values, etc.) influence how attentive we are to God or others?

HANDS

The next time someone talks with you, choose to listen attentively by going through the following steps:

1. Stop what you are doing
2. Use attentive body language (e.g., make eye contact, face them, lean in to hear better, nod, use appropriate facial expressions)
3. Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentence. Remember that their thoughts and feelings are just as important as yours.
4. Try to understand the other person's point of view. Ask questions to make sure you understand their thoughts or repeat what they're saying with different words.

CONFRONTED BY THE GOSPEL

Acts 9:3-20

CONFRONTED BY THE GOSPEL

Jesus speaks clearly through His Word, calling all people to join Him in His mission.

JESUS CONNECTION

The conversion and calling of Saul is a demonstration of God's power to save. Saul's encounter with Jesus transformed him from a hard-hearted persecutor of Jesus' followers into one of the greatest missionaries in the world. Only the gospel can transform a public opponent of Christ into a sincere witness to His salvation.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SUBMISSION – Choosing to be under the authority of others.

HEAD

How did Saul respond to his encounter with Jesus?

Why was Ananias afraid to do what God said? What happened when Ananias followed God's instructions?

HEART

Jesus revealed Himself to Saul on the road. How did getting an accurate view of Jesus change Saul's attitude from proud and defiant to humble and submitted?

Ananias did not want to obey God because he was afraid of Saul. How does fear keep us from submitting to our calling or to those in charge of us?

HANDS

We often think showing submission makes us weak, but God wants us to submit to Him first and then to the authorities He's put over us—unless they are asking us to go against God's way and God's Word. In the situations below, how could you submit to God first in your response?

- The bus driver tells you to be quiet or he'll write you up, but another student was the one talking
- A popular girl makes her friends do embarrassing things in order to sit with her at lunch
- The coach requires 30 burpees for anyone who is late or disrespectful in practice or games
- Your older sister says you have to clean the bathrooms before she gets home

EXPERIENCING NEW IDENTITY IN THE GOSPEL

Colossians 3:1-17

EXPERIENCING NEW IDENTITY IN THE GOSPEL

As believers, we are called to put off sinful behaviors and put on new behaviors that reflect Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION

Those who have trusted in Christ have been given a new identity and new nature in Him. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the old self and sinful behavior are put away, replaced by a new self and way of living that pleases God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SELF-CONTROL – Not acting carelessly on my own impulses, emotions and desires.

HEAD

Fill in the blanks using the verses in Colossians 3 to explain how we are able to live for Jesus.

(verse 2) Set your minds on things _____, not _____ things.

(verse 5) Put to _____ whatever belongs to your _____ nature.

(verse 10) You are being _____ in knowledge according to the image of your _____.

HEART

Why would Paul tell us to "put to death" the behaviors and attitudes that aren't like Jesus? What does he want us to understand about becoming more self-controlled?

God doesn't expect us to become like Jesus by trying harder and harder. Galatians 5:23 says that self-control is actually evidence that the Holy Spirit is working within us. How would it look and feel different to invite the Holy Spirit to help us develop self-control, rather than try harder to have self-control on our own?

HANDS

The kind of self-control described in Colossians 3 is more than just changing an outward behavior. Verse 10 reminds us that our behavior and attitudes change as our minds are renewed. In other words, we learn to live God's way as we learn to think God's way. Choose one of the verses below and write it on an index card or record it as a note in your device. Read it every day this week, try to memorize it and begin replacing your old way of thinking with God's new way.

- Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.
- 1 John 2:15: Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- Philippians 4:8: Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy— dwell on these things.

LESSON 89: DISCERNMENT
HOLDING FAST TO THE GOSPEL

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

HOLDING FAST TO THE GOSPEL

We must know the true gospel so clearly that we're never tempted to believe a false gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

The gospel is an exclusive claim: Jesus alone is the way a person can be saved and come to the Father. As followers of Christ, we are to hold fast to the one true gospel of Jesus, proclaim it to the world and confront the false gospels preached by others.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false and right and wrong.

HEAD

What was Paul afraid might happen to the disciples at the Corinthian church?

How does Paul describe false apostles?

HEART

Paul knew his friends were being tricked by a message that promised good things but would lead to foolish choices and negative consequences. In our lives, people we know can sometimes be blinded to the lies they are believing. When and how is it most helpful to encourage them to discern truth from lies?

How do you feel most tempted to compromise on the truth of God's Word? (E.g., believing that only part of the Bible is true, Jesus is not equal with God the Father, trusting your thoughts or feelings more than the Bible, etc.) How does it encourage you to know that Jesus and His disciples were willing to suffer and die for the truth of the gospel?

HANDS

There are literally thousands of messages competing for your attention every minute of every day: from people, social media, online articles and videos, and more. Which of these three options indicates a discerning approach? What isn't discerning about the other two? Write out your answers and then ask a trusted adult about the three options and how to be more discerning.

1. Believing everything you hear and see

2. Only believing what you already agree with

3. Asking questions or checking out what you read to see if it is true

THE CHURCH IS SENT TO PROCLAIM JESUS

The redemption anticipated by the old covenant is fully experienced in Jesus.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is better than the ancient prophecies and laws because He is the One who fulfills them. Jesus is the Word of God who came so that we might experience a better salvation through His perfect life, death and resurrection.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

RELIABILITY – Living so that others can depend on me.

HEAD

How is Jesus described in Hebrews 1:1-3?

Contrast the role of the high priest in the old covenant with the new covenant by filling in the right side of the chart below:

Old Covenant (Law of Moses)	New Covenant (In Christ)
Heb. 8:5 – Served in the tabernacle and temple	Heb. 8:1-2 –
Heb. 8:5-6 – Spoke to God on behalf of the people	Heb. 8:1-2, 6 –
Heb. 10:11 – Offered sacrifice for sin over and over	Heb. 10:12 –
Heb. 10: 11 – Sacrifice cannot take away sins	Heb. 10:12, 14 –

HEART

How can remembering that Jesus is a faithful mediator for you help you to depend on Him each day?

Do you believe that Jesus is completely reliable? What keeps you from relying on Jesus' work on the cross to save, cleanse you from sin and help you live for Jesus?

HANDS

God is entirely reliable and faithful; He never lets us down. But as humans, we often make mistakes, act foolishly and choose to sin. We can't be perfectly reliable like God, but we can develop a pattern of reliability in our lives. Write either DEPEND ON or RELIABLE down the left-hand side of a piece of paper, one letter on each line. For each letter you wrote, think of a word that starts with that letter that describes someone others can depend on. (For example, you might choose *loyal* for L or *ethical* for E). Post your acrostic and read it every day this week, asking God to help you be more like Jesus in this area.

LESSON 91: PERSEVERANCE
SENT TO DEMONSTRATE FAITH
Hebrew 11:1-2, 32-40; 12:1-2

SENT TO DEMONSTRATE FAITH
When your faith is in Jesus, your life will show it.

JESUS CONNECTION
The examples of faithful men and women in the Bible are a source of strength and encouragement that points us to Jesus. He endured the cross and its shame because He knew glory and joy waited on the other side. In the same way, we can also endure, knowing that our faith, and the hope of all who have believed, will be fulfilled when He returns.

LIFEWISE QUALITY
PERSEVERANCE – Not giving up despite difficulties, failure or opposition.

HEAD
According to Hebrews 11:1, what is the definition of faith?

Who makes up the "large cloud of witnesses?" How did they show their faith in God?

HEART

Just like a runner puts aside everything that distracts him to keep his focus on the finish line, we are to lay aside every sin or distraction that keeps us from following Jesus. What thoughts, sins or distractions tempt you to give in when you face hard things?

How does it help us to persevere in our faith when we remember the examples of the “cloud of witnesses”?

HANDS

In the middle of a piece of paper or card stock, write one long-term goal that you have for your life. Draw a circle around that goal. All around that circle write down things that will help you achieve that goal in one color and things that will keep you from reaching that goal in a second color. Choose one of each color and write down 2 specific ways you can build the helpful one into your or work through the obstacle so that you can persevere when you want to give up.

SENT TO TRUST GOD

God responds to prayer even when we have difficulty seeing Him at work.

JESUS CONNECTION

When Peter was arrested and put in prison, the church prayed fervently for him, and God miraculously delivered Peter. Though God does not promise to give us everything we pray for, He does call us to pray constantly (1 Thess. 5:17) because Jesus stands before God as our faithful high priest who appeals to God on our behalf in Heaven (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

LIFEWISE QUALITY

PERSISTENCE – Repeatedly practicing a good behavior until it's a habit.

HEAD

How did God deliver Peter from prison and possible death?

How did the servant Rhoda respond to Peter's escape differently from the other disciples?

HEART

God delivered Peter from prison, but James was put to death. It is normal to feel discouraged when it seems God is working in some situations, but not others. How can this story encourage you to persist in prayer, even when you can't see God working?

How might your prayers change if you remember that God is always listening when you talk to Him?

HANDS

Write down three ways you would like to grow as a person. Use the categories below or create your own.

- Character trait (contentment, love, responsibility, forgiveness, etc.)
- Habit (telling the truth, eating right, speaking respectfully to others, going to church, etc.)
- Skill (academic, arts, sports, etc.)
- Hobby (photography, skateboarding, writing, etc.)

Choose the area from your list that you would most like to grow in. Write out three specific actions you can take every day this week to grow in this area. Pray and ask God to help you be persistent in following through with these steps.

SENT TO THE WORLD

God sends missionaries from the church to take the gospel to the entire world.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus told His disciples that the power of Satan would not overcome His church. God's people are called to continue the mission Jesus began through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can take the good news of Jesus to places of deep spiritual darkness with confidence, knowing that Jesus will build His church.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

BOLDNESS – Choosing to do the right thing, even if you are afraid.

HEAD

What were Saul and Barnabus doing before God set them apart to share the gospel in other places?

How did Saul respond when Elymas opposed the good news about Jesus? Where did Saul's message for Elymas come from?

HEART

The Holy Spirit chose Saul and Barnabus to tell people about Jesus. How does knowing that the same Spirit calls each of Jesus' disciples to share the gospel help you to be bold in sharing your faith?

Saul was totally convinced about the truth of Jesus he was sent to share. Why is it easier to be bold when you are sure of what you're saying? What happens when you aren't sure about what you're sharing?

HANDS

Boldness means choosing to do what is right, even when someone disagrees with you or you're afraid. We cheer on the hero of our favorite stories for being bold in hard situations, but it's not easy to do it in real life. Consider the examples below and decide how you could respond boldly by standing for what is right in each one.

- The captain of your sports team asks to copy your answers on the homework sheet he didn't get finished last night

- During a class discussion about world religions, the teacher asks for someone to explain what Christians believe about Jesus

- Another student is pestering a kid in your class who doesn't have a lot of friends

LESSON 94: ACCEPTANCE
SENT TO UNITE IN THE GOSPEL

1 Corinthians 10:1-13, 17-21; John 17:20-23

SENT TO UNITE IN THE GOSPEL

God unites the church through the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

While addressing the many problems they were facing, Paul reminded the church at Corinth to focus on the gospel instead of arguing about foolish things. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, believers are brought into one body to live in unity and harmony as an expression of the great power of the gospel.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

ACCEPTANCE – Choosing to treat everyone equally.

HEAD

What was the church at Corinth arguing about?

What does Jesus pray for in John 17:20-23? Why is this so essential?

HEART

What are some ways we think of ourselves or others that divide us? How can knowing that Jesus prayed for the unity of His followers motivate us to work through these divisions?

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would connect His followers to Christ and to one another. How might knowing that you are connected spiritually to other disciples change the way you think of and interact with them?

HANDS

It isn't always easy to accept other people, especially when someone speaks and acts differently than we do. However, God calls us to treat every person with equal respect and consideration. This doesn't mean we have to agree with everything someone thinks, says or does. It does mean that we choose to acknowledge the worth of each person regardless of what they do. Think of someone you have trouble accepting or getting along with. Ask God to help you treat that person respectfully this week. Use the list below or come up with your own ideas on how to treat this person respectfully.

1. Acknowledge them (look them in the eye, smile or say hello)

2. Involve them (speak to them, include them and listen to their viewpoint and opinions considerately)

3. Treat them with the same respect and kindness that you would a friend

LIFEWISE
Middle School

LESSON 95: COMMITMENT
UNITED UNDER GODLY LEADER

2 Timothy 1:8-14, 2:1-7

UNITED UNDER GODLY LEADERS

God empowers church leaders to proclaim and guard the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

Paul instructed Timothy to lead the church well by finding strength in Christ, living unashamed of the gospel and faithfully preaching the good news. Because Jesus died to serve the church, pastors and leaders are called to live sacrificially to serve the church as well.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

HEAD

Why isn't Paul ashamed of the gospel message?

What did Paul advise Timothy to do when he experiences suffering?

HEART

Jesus was willing to be mistreated and even killed to save us from our sins. How does His example help you keep your commitments, even when you get discouraged?

What do you think it means to make a commitment to follow Jesus? If you haven't made that commitment, what is holding you back?

HANDS

Make a list of your commitments (school, extracurricular activities, home life, relationships, etc.). Choose one commitment that you struggle to keep. Follow the AIM approach below:

- A – Ask. Ask God to give you the strength and determination to keep your commitment.

- I – Identify barriers. Write down 1–2 specific roadblocks that hold you back from keeping this commitment. For each roadblock, write down a specific solution. Ask someone you trust to help you brainstorm ideas, if needed.

- M – Make a plan. Create a plan to do this week. Post it for yourself to see and ask someone you trust to hold you accountable. Pray that God would give you the strength and determination to keep this commitment. After a week, tell your accountability partner how it went.

LESSON 96: INITIATIVE
UNITED IN THE ESSENTIALS

Acts 15:1-11, 14-21

UNITED IN THE ESSENTIALS

Salvation is through faith alone.

JESUS CONNECTION

A dispute arose in the early church: was faith in Christ enough to be accepted as God's child, or was something more needed? Church leaders agreed that faith in Jesus' death and resurrection is all that is needed for each sinner to be saved from sin and declared "not guilty" before God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

INITIATIVE – Recognizing and doing what needs to be done without being asked.

HEAD

What teaching about salvation was dividing the church? How did they address the problem?

What instructions were given to new followers of Jesus?

HEART

The early church took the initiative to address the conflict instead of trying to ignore it. When is it most difficult for you to take initiative? Why?

Jesus took the initiative with us: He left Heaven and came to us, taught and showed us what God is like, died on the cross for our sins, rose again and appeared to many, went back to Heaven to prepare a place for His followers and sent the Holy Spirit to live in His disciples. How does remembering what Jesus did motivate you to take initiative?

HANDS

Initiative isn't just doing what we say we will do. Initiative is seeing whatever needs done or needs to be dealt with and diving in to address it. How could you show initiative in these scenarios?

- When sitting down to eat, you grab the last clean fork from the drawer.
- After a disagreement, your friend hasn't spoken to you for nearly a week.
- The LifeWise teacher challenges you to read the whole book of John this month.

UNITED IN LOVE
God calls the church to build bridges in order to share the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION
Paul was troubled that the people in Athens worshiped idols. Paul took every opportunity to preach the gospel to those who needed to hear it, following the example of Jesus, who, out of love, served others and sacrificed Himself for them.

LIFEWISE QUALITY
ATTENTIVENESS – Choosing to listen and pay attention to others.

HEAD
How did Paul introduce God to the people of Athens? Why do you think he did this?

What part of the good news did many people in Athens reject?

HEART

How do the voices and ideas we pay attention to affect or influence us? Why is it important to be attentive to what the Bible says about God, about people and about the world?

Paul was attentive to Athens and its people before he taught them about Jesus. How might getting to know someone first help you share about Jesus in a way that can be better understood?

HANDS

Being attentive does not come naturally to most people, but it can be learned. Choose one of the examples below to practice being attentive this week, or come up with your own ideas.

- Repeat back what a parent or coach says to you to make sure you understood them correctly.
- Check the board in your classes for any homework, instructions or notes the teacher has up before asking him or her questions.
- Purposely let your friend talk more than you at lunch. Ask them questions to allow them more time to share, instead of interrupting with your own stories.

UNITED IN FAITH
God's children live by faith.

JESUS CONNECTION
Paul reminded the church in Galatia of the gospel message: Jesus lived a sinless life, died for our sin and rose again so that we can be saved by grace alone through faith.

LIFEWISE QUALITY
GROWTH – Becoming more mature by learning from my mistakes.

HEAD
What is the purpose of the law of Moses?

Why is it unnecessary for Jesus' followers to rely on the law to save them? What did Paul tell them to rely on instead?

HEART

After coming to faith in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Galatians were trying to earn their faith by obeying the laws of Moses. What types of "good" things have you done to earn God's approval? Why does Paul call this foolishness?

By faith, we believe that Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (obeying "rules" to be accepted by God) by dying for us on the cross. Why is it more important to think about our growth as a Christian in terms of faith, not following rules?

HANDS

The goal of growth is always maturity. Draw or cut out and tape a picture of a full-grown, mature tree on a piece of paper. Using Jeremiah 17:8 and Psalm 1 (below), write on the paper words or phrases that God uses to describe what this kind of maturity looks like and where it comes from. Ask God to help you to grow in your faith so that these words can be used to describe you.

- Jeremiah 17:7–8 – "The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed. He will be like a tree planted by water: It sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit."
- Psalm 1:1–3 – "How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."

UNITED IN HOPE
Christ's return is the hope of the Church.

JESUS CONNECTION
Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them, but that He would come again (John 14:3). When Christ returns, He will reverse the effects of sin and make all things new. Christ's return gives the Church hope and motivation to share the gospel with urgency.

LIFEWISE QUALITY
HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

HEAD
What will happen to Jesus' followers when He returns?

How can Jesus' disciples prepare for His return?

HEART

Paul says that God did not appoint His followers to experience God's anger over our sin, but to be saved from sin, death and the power of Satan. How does understanding God's plan give you hope?

Paul described the hope of our salvation as a helmet. How can hope in God's ability and desire to give you eternal life protect your mind each day?

HANDS

We often use the word *hope* for what we want to see happen, as in "I hope our team wins on Friday." But hope is not the same as positive thinking or wishful thinking. When we expect that God will always do what is best for us, we are placing our hope in God's unending goodness toward us. Think of something you are afraid of or anxious about. Complete the sentence below to remind yourself that "this hope will not disappoint us" (Rom. 5:5). Post your sentence where you can see it this week to remind yourself to pray about the situation, asking God to give you hope.

Even though [name the situation you're facing], I have hope because:

- God promised that _____.
- Jesus _____.
- And there is nothing _____.

LESSON 100: TEACHABLE
PERSEVERING IN THE MISSION

Acts 19:1-10, 18-20

PERSEVERING IN THE MISSION

The Holy Spirit transforms our lives through the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

Paul faithfully shared the gospel with everyone he met and persevered in his efforts. The lives of many were transformed as they trusted in Jesus. Paul's example pointed to Jesus, who faithfully endured to bring salvation to the world.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TEACHABLE – Being willing to change my mind and actions as I learn.

HEAD

The disciples in Ephesus believed in the message of repentance for sin. What part of the gospel message were they missing?

How did the Holy Spirit change the hearts of those who trusted in the good news about Jesus?

HEART

When we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit will reveal where our thoughts or beliefs are different from what God says. How can we show a teachable response when this happens?

Being teachable means being willing to change your mind. On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to change your mind, generally? What makes it easier or harder to change your mind?

HANDS

A teachable person is willing to change so they are more in line with what is true and right. For the situations below, decide if the person is showing a teachable attitude. If not, what would it look like to be teachable?

- The instructor shows a shorter way to do the math, but you like your way better.
- Your older sister offers to help you get organized so you stop losing your homework, so you let her show you how she stays organized.
- You're reading a book that makes a bunch of points you don't like, so you stop reading it entirely.

CONTINUING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Acts 20:30; 23:6-17, 22-24

CONTINUING THROUGH OPPOSITION

God strengthens His people through His presence.

JESUS CONNECTION

Paul remained confident by remembering God's faithfulness to His people. God revealed Himself through Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' example shows that God will sustain His disciples through persecution and trials.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even in difficult circumstances.

HEAD

What dangers did Paul face in sharing the gospel?

How did God use the soldiers to protect Paul in the midst of great opposition?

HEART

The Bible says that God is good and faithful. How does knowing who God is help you to live with courage even in difficult times?

Both Jesus and Paul continued to talk about God in spite of great opposition (e.g., others ignoring or arguing with them, threats, physical harm, arrest). What kinds of opposition do we face today? What makes it hard for us to show courage in those situations?

HANDS

Fear is one of the biggest hurdles to living with courage. People are afraid of many things. Some of them are small, like speaking in public, spiders or going to the dentist. But others are much bigger. In the lists below, draw a line to match each fear to the truth about God that addresses that fear. Choose one that you struggle with (or pick a different one). Pray about it, confessing to God that you're scared in this area. Ask Him to remind you of the truth and ask Him for the courage to do what's right in spite of your fear.

Rejection	God always keeps His promises.
Failure	Jesus said, "I am coming again."
The Future	God loves us with an everlasting love.
Change	Jesus will never leave us or forsake us.
Uncertainty/What if	Nothing can separate us from God's love.

LESSON 102: COOPERATION
BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Ephesians 2:1-10, 14-16

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Jesus unites us to God and to one another through the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

The gospel breaks down barriers and unites those who have trusted in Jesus for salvation by grace through faith. Jesus has reconciled all who believe into one body—the church.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COOPERATION – Choosing to work with others toward a goal.

HEAD

How does Paul describe each of us before we turn to Jesus in faith? How are we changed after we repent of our sin and believe the good news of Jesus?

Why has God chosen to accept and save us from sin through faith alone instead of saving us because of good works?

HEART

No one deserves salvation or can earn it. How should this fact affect how we compare ourselves with others, whether they believe in Jesus or not?

Even people who believe in Jesus disagree sometimes. How does knowing Jesus give us a foundation that allows us to cooperate with other believers' help, even if we don't always agree with them?

HANDS

Cooperation requires finding common ground. Jesus is the very best common ground ("He Himself is our peace" who "tore down the dividing wall of hostility"), but we can use any similarity as a starting point. Think of someone in a class or group or on a team with you with whom you do not get along. Is that conflict hurting the group's ability to work well? Try to find some common ground with that person. Write down three things you have in common. Make a point of trying to connect with that person this week by starting a conversation about that connection.

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

Philippians 3:7-21

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

Jesus is the greatest treasure and reward.

JESUS CONNECTION

The apostle Paul described living God's way like running a race so that we gain the ultimate prize: fully knowing Jesus, being with God forever and receiving new, perfect bodies one day. Our perseverance in the race reminds us of Jesus and His endurance of the cross, which provided forgiveness of our sins and salvation.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

HEAD

What was Paul willing to let go of in order to "gain Christ"?

What was Paul's goal in life? Why?

HEART

What is something you have given up in order to gain something better? Why was what you gained worth the sacrifice?

Why is it so hard to see all our successes, or "gains," in life as something to let go of (Phil. 3:7), and to consider knowing Jesus to be the greatest thing we could gain (Phil. 3:8)?

HANDS

Choosing to sacrifice is hard, but it can be easier to sacrifice when we focus on what we gain instead of what we are giving up. Fill in the chart below by listing what we have to give up (first column) and what we might gain (second column) in each situation. Ask God to change your heart to be willing to sacrifice like Jesus did and to help you focus on the benefits, instead of the costs, when you are called to sacrifice.

Situation	What will it cost?	What will you gain?
You take a summer job doing yard work for your elderly neighbor every week.		
You challenge yourself to read the entire Bible in a year.		
(Your situation):		

PREACHING IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Acts 24:1-9, 25:1-12, 26:27-32

PREACHING IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Live for Christ wherever God's providence places you.

JESUS CONNECTION

God told Paul that he would preach before kings and that he would reach Rome. God's chosen path placed Paul in chains as a prisoner for His faith. Paul trusted in the power of the gospel to save, continuing to preach the gospel in the face of false accusations, unjust sentencing and possible torture and death.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.

HEAD

What did the Jewish leaders accuse Paul of?

How did Paul respond to their accusations?

HEART

Jesus chose Paul to take the good news of the gospel to the Israelites, Gentiles and kings (Acts 9:15). And over many years, God arranged for Paul to speak to all of those people about Jesus. How might remembering that God also has a good and perfect plan for you help you to live with patience?

Paul was imprisoned for at least three years in Caesarea. He waited patiently for his trial, and he kept sharing his faith in Jesus with everyone he met. How can you keep living God's way as you wait patiently for God to work?

HANDS

When things aren't going as we'd wished, we may be tempted to take matters into our own hands. We try to hurry a response from parents, a coach or teacher, or our friend. We may even resort to doing wrong to get even or to get out of the situation. But the Bible instructs us to wait for God. For each of the verses below, write down what we are to wait for and why. Ask God to help you wait patiently for Him.

- Psalms 27:13–14 – I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart be courageous. Wait for the Lord.

- Proverbs 20:22 – Don't say, "I will avenge this evil!" Wait on the Lord, and He will rescue you.

- Romans 8:25 – Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

- Titus 2:11–13 – For the grace of God as appeared, bringing salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CLINGING TO THE PROMISES OF GOD

Acts 27:21-24, 30-44

CLINGING TO THE PROMISES OF GOD

God often fulfills His promises through human action.

JESUS CONNECTION

God told Paul that the only way to be rescued was to stay on the ship as it endured the storm. In the same way, we cling to Jesus' death and resurrection as our only hope, both to save us from our sin and to carry us through the storms of life. In the midst of crisis, God promises to save those who place their trust in His power and promises.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONFIDENCE – Full trust or assurance in the reliability of a person or thing.

HEAD

What did God promise Paul in the middle of the storm?

What did Paul do to show the other passengers his confidence in God's promises?

HEART

Paul was confident that God would save everyone on the ship because God had always kept His promises to Paul before. How can knowing that God will always keep His promises (Numbers 23:19) give you confidence today?

Our confidence is only as solid as what we depend on. What are some things that people depend on, other than God? Why don't those things provide a solid foundation for our confidence?

HANDS

We can always put our full confidence in God for all our needs. But sometimes, we put too much confidence in ourselves, other people or trust in something we shouldn't. For each of the characteristics in the list below, decide whether it builds confidence or undermines it.

- Being on time or early most of the time
- Sharing gossip or overheard information with other people
- Speaking honestly, even when it's hard
- Working hard to respect other people and things
- Wasting money and time
- A willingness to take the easy way out

Using this list (and other factors), ask God to help you choose wisely who you put your confidence in and to help you become more like Jesus so that others can put their confidence in you.

LIVING IN GRACE

The gospel calls us to treat each other like family.

JESUS CONNECTION

Paul made peace between Onesimus, a runaway slave, and his master, Philemon. Paul offered to pay Onesimus' debt to heal their broken relationship. Paul's example points to Jesus Christ, who is the peacemaker between God and sinners. By paying our debt for sin, Jesus restores our relationship with God and others.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Erasing a debt that another person owes me.

HEAD

How had Onesimus wronged Philemon? How did Paul ask Philemon to respond?

How did Onesimus' decision to follow Christ change his relationship with Philemon?

HEART

Paul appealed to Philemon to forgive out of love, not because of some rules (vs. 8–9). Why is love a better foundation for forgiveness?

Paul was willing to pay any debt Onesimus owed to Philemon so Onesimus could be forgiven completely. God offers us forgiveness because Jesus took our punishment on the cross. How does this sacrificial gift inspire us to forgive and sacrifice for others?

HANDS

Forgiveness is only necessary when there has been hurt, and being hurt makes it very hard to forgive. But God models forgiveness for us and calls us to forgive as He has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). Think of a broken relationship in your life. Write down a short explanation of what happened between you. Now pray and tell God about the situation. Ask Him to help you see anything that you need to ask their forgiveness for and the strength to apologize. Then, do that this week. If you are the one who was wronged, ask God to help you to forgive them, even if they are unwilling to apologize right now.

OBEYING FROM LOVE

The gospel motivates us to love and obey God.

JESUS CONNECTION

John reminded the Church that the more we know God, the more we love Him and want to obey Him. Loving obedience is best demonstrated by Jesus Himself, who obeyed the Father and laid down His life for others.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

HEAD

When we sin, who speaks with God on our behalf?

What does a true follower of Christ do?

HEART

Jesus models love for us: love for God, love for others. How does Jesus' love encourage you to love God or others more?

Paul connects love and obedience. How does obeying God or others show that we love them? Does loving someone mean you have to do whatever he or she says?

HANDS

No one always wants to do what we're asked to do. When it's difficult to obey, we can do it either out of obligation or out of love. Obligation acts with a bad attitude, half-hearted actions and grumbling words. Real love tries its hardest, chooses not to grumble and sees taking action as a way to please and encourage the one who asked. Jesus modeled real love for us, and we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us do what we're asked with the same love that He had. For each situation below, fill in the columns by describing what it would look like to do what was asked both ways.

Situation	Obligation	Love
A relative has been sick and your friend tells you to call them to say hi.		
A teacher lets you use her room to work on a project but asks you to clean up.		
Your principal asks you to help another student with math, but he is often mean to you.		

DEFENDING THE FAITH

Christ protects the gospel through the vigilance of His Church.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jude warned the early disciples of Jesus that some people would create division in the Church through false teaching and sinful living. Jesus will protect His people from stumbling and enable us to stand in His presence blameless and with great joy.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

HEAD

What word pictures does Jude use to describe the false prophets?

How should Jesus' followers live in the midst of false prophets?

HEART

Jude warned us to watch out for teachers who did not live or teach the truth about Jesus. Does this mean that we should be suspicious of every Bible teacher? How can we know whom to listen to and whom to avoid?

Discernment requires knowing what is true from what is false, but how we engage with others about what is true matters. What are the right and wrong ways to discuss what is true and false, right and wrong?

HANDS

Discernment is an important skill so that we recognize truth from falsehood and right from wrong. But only God sees truth and rightness perfectly. Being discerning should not mean building an echo chamber—only listening or talking to people who already agree with you. To discern, we need to be open to conversations with people who think or believe differently and then compare those ideas to what the Bible says. Choose to do one of the following this week:

- Read, talk about or listen to an idea you don't already agree with
- Engage with people who are on "the other side" of an issue from you. Discuss their point of view respectfully.
- Compare some of your ideas on how to think and live to what the Bible says. If you have trouble learning what the Bible says on a specific topic, ask your LifeWise teacher, pastor or youth pastor.

THE REDEEMER REVEALS HIS GLORY

Revelation 1:9-20

THE REDEEMER REVEALS HIS GLORY

The victory of Christ motivates endurance in the gospel.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus declared that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. He defeated death and sin through His crucifixion and resurrection. The same Jesus who was once crucified in shame is the Jesus who is now exalted in glory.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even in difficult circumstances.

HEAD

When John had a vision of Jesus, what did Jesus ask John to do?

How did John describe Jesus in his vision?

HEART

John was exiled to the island of Patmos because he was sharing the gospel. How would John's vision of Jesus help him to have courage to continue to talk about Jesus?

What fears keep you from doing the right thing? How does remembering that Jesus is a powerful, holy King give you the courage to live God's way, no matter what?

HANDS

Jesus told John, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades." In other words, Jesus has complete control of all things, including the future. When you are nervous or anxious, this truth can provide courage to keep going and to do what's right. What would it look like to have courage in these situations?

- You've struggled with math class all year, and if you fail this week's test, you won't pass the class
- A good friend suddenly starts spreading rumors about you, and now no one wants to sit with you or show support for you
- A close family friend is waiting to find out whether they have cancer

LIFEWISE Middle School

LESSON 110: WHOLEHEARTEDNESS
THE REDEEMER CALLS US TOWARD RENEWAL

Revelation 3:14-22

THE REDEEMER CALLS US TOWARD RENEWAL

Jesus calls His people to recognize their need for Him.

JESUS CONNECTION

Because the church is the bride of Christ for whom He died, Jesus cares deeply about its purity. The church is purified and renewed through recalling who Jesus is, recognizing and repenting of sin and remembering the reward that awaits those who are faithful to the end.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

HEAD

Why does Jesus rebuke (criticize) the church at Laodicea?

What does Jesus promise to those who are "zealous and repent" of their sin?

HEART

The Laodicean church was wealthy and prosperous, so they thought God was pleased with them. Why might external realities (money, fame, accomplishments, etc.) not be a good indicator of a right/close relationship with God?

The Laodicean church had closed the door on a close personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus stands at our door and knocks, but He doesn't come barging in. We are free to listen to His voice and open the door, welcoming Him to be close with us … or not. What might keep someone from answering Jesus' knock?

HANDS

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that it is impossible to serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). We can only have one master at a time. It is important to examine who or what is actually our main focus: God, ourselves or someone or something else. Consider these questions to help you determine what your true focus is; ask God to help you put away what distracts you so you can serve Him wholeheartedly.

- What do I spend the most free time doing on a normal day?
- Is there a person I am very afraid to offend or upset because I'm afraid they won't like me anymore?
- When I have money, do I spend or save it? What do I mostly spend it on?
- How much time do I spend building a relationship with God by reading the Bible and praying?

Keep a daily log this week. For each day, write down how much time you spend reading your Bible and/or praying and in a second column, how much or how often you do **one** of the following: spend money, play a sport or video game, do a hobby, do your schoolwork or spend time with your family. At the end of the week, compare the two lists. What does your log reveal about how wholehearted you are?

THE REDEEMER IS WORSHIPED

Revelation 5:1-14

THE REDEEMER IS WORSHIPED

Jesus is worthy of worship because of His sacrifice.

JESUS CONNECTION

When John saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll or break its seals, he wept. Then, John saw the slaughtered Lamb on the throne—Jesus, the Son of God, was slain for our sins. His life was the price needed to bring us back to God. Jesus is the One worthy of all praise and honor and blessing.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

HEAD

Why isn't anyone but Jesus worthy to open the scroll in John's vision?

How did everyone respond to Jesus when He took the scroll?

HEART

In John's vision, we see Jesus as our sinless sacrifice and reigning King. How should we see ourselves in light of who He is? What is the most appropriate response to His glory?

Everyone in Heaven recognized Jesus' unequaled worth. Instead of looking at one another, their attention was all on Him. How can comparing ourselves with Jesus, rather than others, help us to have a humble attitude?

HANDS

Do you find it easy to willingly humble yourself, or do you make every effort to build up yourself and your reputation? Think about the things you post about yourself on social media or share with others in person. Do you try to prompt others to praise you or sway others to think more highly of you? Is it difficult for you when another student wins a game in class or gets the credit for something? These are some ways our pride can appear. Ask God to help you see pride in your actions and to help you choose to live humbly, trusting Him to take care of you and the results. Choose to do one or more of the following this week:

- Post something on social media that doesn't prompt praise or attention toward you
- Congratulate the student or team that wins a game
- Tell a fellow student when you see that they've done something well

THE REDEEMER RETURNS

Revelation 19:11-16, 21:1-5, 22:1-5

THE REDEEMER RETURNS

Jesus will return to rid the world of evil and reign forever.

JESUS CONNECTION

This present age will come to an end when Christ returns to fulfill His promises. Jesus will erase the effects of sin and make everything new. Only those cleansed in faith by the blood of the Lamb will reign with Jesus forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

JOY – Having a cheerful response regardless of my circumstances.

HEAD

When Jesus returns, what will be destroyed?

What will the new Heaven and Harth be like?

HEART

Joy is a response to seeing something turn out the best way possible—a wedding, a new baby, a milestone birthday or a big accomplishment. When you think of John's vision of the new Heaven and new Earth, which parts make you the most joyful?

The Bible promises that, in the end, Jesus reigns. But this is not the end of the story—it's the beginning of eternity with Him. How can knowing the future bring you joy in the present, even when life is difficult?

HANDS

On a piece of paper, write "He makes all things new." Then, make a collage of words or images to show the kinds of things that John describes will be true in the new Heaven and the new Earth. Hang it somewhere to remind you of all the joy and future reward that God promises to His people.